

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-34 remain in this application. Claims 1-22 are allowed. Claims 23-34 are finally rejected.

1. Claim Rejections Under 35 USC §103

Claims 23, 24 and 30-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Merkel (US 6,087,281) in view of Beall at al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0004445 A1) or Published International Application WO 01/91882 A1.

Respectfully, the rejection is traversed. Beall has been effectively disqualified as prior art by the attached 1.132 Affidavit wherein the subject matter relied upon by the Examiner in Beall WO 01/91882 has been attributed to inventors of the present application. Examiner should also note that the publication date of WO 01/91882 A1 of December 6, 2001 is not greater than 1 year from the filing date of the provision application 60/392,699 filed June 22, 2002 for which priority is claimed in the present application.

Accordingly, the rejection of claims 23-34 are improper and should be withdrawn.

2. Allowable Subject Matter

Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 1-22 are allowable.

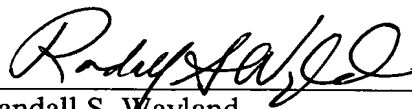
3. Conclusion

Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of records, Applicants believe the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Applicants believe that a no extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely. Should Applicants be in error, Applicants respectfully request that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Please direct any questions or comments to Randall S. Wayland at 607-974-0463.

Respectfully submitted,



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